

UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENT POSSIBILITIES

United States Attorney's Office
Judiciary Center Building
555 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

FRONT OFFICE

An intern in the Front Office will gain insight into the mechanics of the United States Attorney's Office as a whole. Clerks are expected to provide support to Principal and Executive Assistant United States Attorneys, Office of Professional Development, Special Counsel, and staff. Clerks will have an opportunity to get involved in a wide-array of projects that impact the legal system here in the District of Columbia.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION (LEC) INTERN

The Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee program was designed to enhance the relationship between the United State's Attorney's Office and the federal and local law enforcement agencies that operate in and around the District of Columbia. The LECC program develops and administers training programs for law enforcement officers and agents as well as for United States Attorney's Office personnel in such areas as investigations, interviewing techniques, and other practical law enforcement issues. Additionally, the LECC program is instrumental in suggesting policy to the United States Attorney that affects law enforcement in this district.

The intern candidate is afforded the opportunity to participate in the development and administration of law enforcement training programs to the local police department and federal agencies within the Washington Metropolitan Area. Short term projects with the LECC staff and other divisions within the United States Attorney's Office are assigned to gain comprehensive knowledge of the Washington, D.C. Criminal Justice System.

The candidate will be expected to attend meetings and briefings at both local and federal law enforcement levels, observe courtroom proceedings in local and federal court, and gain first hand knowledge of community policing within the District of Columbia. Highly motivated candidates are required to have a strong background in computer and writing skills. This position provides a great environment for a student who is undecided in their career choice between law enforcement and law practice.

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Professional Development is responsible for providing training to attorneys and administrative staff for attorneys in the U.S. Attorney's Office. OPD presents training programs for attorneys on a variety of subjects relevant to criminal trial practice, including constitutional law, trial advocacy and scientific and technical issues. Interns will be responsible for helping locate and evaluate training opportunities for attorneys in the Office, and for assisting in the development and presentation of training programs.

VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE UNIT (VWAU)

The Victim Witness Assistance Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia is responsible for assisting victims and witnesses of crime by providing information on the criminal justice system and providing services to enable them to better cope with the consequences of crime. The U.S. Attorney's Office is responsible for prosecuting criminal violations of federal law as well as violations of the District of

Columbia Code, therefore the VWAU provides assistance to victims and witnesses involved in cases in U.S. District Court cases and D.C. Superior Court. The VWAU provides victims with counseling, crisis intervention, referral services, and assistance with the court process.

The VWAU internship is designed to provide interns with exposure to all areas of victim services and advocacy, as well as an opportunity to focus on special projects. A highly motivated, self-directed person with a strong interest in victim's issues or advocacy work is required. Computer knowledge and writing skills are highly desirable.

The VWAU accommodates special victim populations, sex assault physical abuse adult and child victims, disabled victims, elderly victims, domestic violence victims, and survivors of homicide victims. The following are special emphasis areas on which interns may choose to focus their time and energies:

- Assist with domestic violence intake/advocacy in conjunction with the new domestic violence prosecution unit.
- Working with D.C. Superior Court and the Office of Corporation Counsel.
- Assist with implementation of the KidsCourt, the U.S. Attorney's Office court orientation program for child victims and witnesses who must testify in court.
- Assist the U.S. Attorney's Office Sex Offense Specialists with services for child victims, including escorting children to court, and to Child Advocacy Center.
- Assist with the update and organization of VWAU resource library on victim witness issues.
- Students will work with Victim/Witness Specialists in the following areas: Adult Sexual Assault, Child/Physical/sexual abuse, Violent Crime, Felony, Criminal Prosecution and families of Homicide victims, providing VUAU services explaining criminal justice issues, court escort, and referrals to community services .

DISTRICT COURT ASSIGNMENTS

CRIMINAL DIVISION, NARCOTICS AND ORGANIZED CRIME

The Narcotics Section is comprised of approximately 30 attorneys, and is the largest Section in the Criminal Division. The Section is made up of several units, including the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), the Drug Trial Unit, and the Asset Forfeiture Unit.

Undergraduate students serving as interns in the Section, will provide litigation support and aid in document production. Interns will also have the opportunity to observe hearings and trials that they are working on, or in which they are interested.

CRIMINAL DIVISION, FRAUD AND PUBLIC CORRUPTION

The Fraud and Public Corruption Section is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of a variety of white collar crimes. These include economic crimes, such as tax violations, thefts, and embezzlements, as well as business, banking, securities, telemarketing, credit card, computer, identity theft,

mail, wire, health care, and consumer frauds. In addition, this section prosecutes misconduct by officials of both federal and local governments for violations of the public trust, including improper use of office and improper personal enrichment. It also has responsibility to prosecute private individuals for aiding and abetting government officials in their unlawful conduct, and handles allegations of false statements to government agencies, obstruction of justice, and perjury.

Working with various law enforcement agencies, Inspectors General and regulatory agencies, Assistants in the Section conduct grand jury investigations, draft and obtain indictments, and try cases. Service in the Section offers Assistants the opportunity to investigate and prosecute offenders who have developed sophisticated financial schemes and as well as high profile cases against public officials. Although it is staffed primarily by senior attorneys, rotational positions have been created in the Section to provide junior attorneys with exposure to these complex prosecutions.

The interns assigned to this section can expect to provide administrative, investigative and litigation support and aid. This support will also include trial support and document production for AUSAs. The degree of responsibility given to interns will depend upon their performance and ability to gain the confidence of attorneys. Interns have the opportunity to observe hearings and trials.

SUPERIOR COURT ASSIGNMENTS

HOMICIDE/MAJOR CRIMES

The Community Prosecution Section, a pilot project that began in 1996, is responsible for the prosecution of virtually all crimes committed within the Metropolitan Police Department's Fifth District. Unlike other Sections that specialize in the type of crime prosecuted (such as the Homicide Section or the Narcotics Section), the Community Prosecution Section has assigned its attorneys to specific neighborhoods: each attorney handles investigations of crimes occurring there, whether it is a murder, a robbery, or a federal drug investigation, from arrest through final disposition. The AUSA is also responsible for meeting with community members in his/her area and for working more closely with the law enforcement officers handling matters there. The Section strives to handle its cases in such a way as to improve the quality of life for the residents of the area and to better our working relationship with citizens, civic groups, and other city and Federal agencies.

Law clerks in this Section are considered part of the CP team and receive practical, hands-on experience in all aspects of criminal law. Working in the Section provides the student with the opportunity to assist in the interviewing of police officers and witnesses, analyzing factual situations, doing research on legal issues, and drafting motions and responses concerning some of the most complex and challenging issues confronting AUSAs in the Office. In addition, students are called upon to assist attorneys in trial preparation and are frequently asked to attend a trial to support the litigation effort. The degree of responsibility given to students will depend upon their performance and ability to gain the confidence of attorneys. A student will find his or her work in the Section to be an unforgettable educational and real-life experience.

SEX OFFENSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SECTION

The Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Section is an advanced component of the Superior Court Division, responsible for the prosecution of all felony sexual assaults (including rape and child molestation), child physical abuse, and domestic violence -- along with associated crimes such as burglary, kidnaping, robbery, stalking and weapons charges. The Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Section prosecutes each

case vertically, that is one prosecutor is responsible for the case from the initial interview of the victim, through the investigation and charging process, to trial, plea, or other disposition.

The Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Section has two primary Units. The Sex Offense Unit currently handles all felony sex offense cases. The Domestic Violence Unit is responsible for the prosecution of all misdemeanor intrafamily offenses ranging from assaults to property crimes. The Domestic Violence Unit is committed to aggressive prosecution of all forms of domestic violence including spouse abuse, partner abuse, intra family child abuse, and elder abuse.

Law clerks working with this Section will find their research, analytical and interpersonal skills challenged. They may assist in the interviews of victims and witnesses (including police officers), prepare case jackets, help write motions and other pleadings, and provide trial support. The nature of caseload in the Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Section lends itself to a variety of research topics including voir dire, witness competency, admissible hearsay, search and seizure, DNA evidence, evidence of a victim's prior sexual history or drug use, evidence of other similar crimes committed by the defendant, AIDS testing, expert witness testimony, testimonial privileges, and jury instructions. The combination of a compelling caseload and intriguing research issues yields an invaluable experience for law students interested in the practical aspects of criminal prosecution with a special emphasis on violence against women and children.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ASSISTANCE (DVVA)

The U.S. Attorney's Office has a Domestic Violence Unit that focuses on local crime victims of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Advocates provide victims with risk assessment, crisis intervention, safety planning, short-term counseling, referral services, and assistance with the court process. Interns will assist Victim Advocates by doing intakes in the Domestic Violence Intake Center in Superior Court, providing follow-up to domestic violence victims, court notification, escorting victims to court, and interviewing victims about the impact of victimization. Further, interns work with victims on written statements about the traumatic effects of the violence on victims and their children that are given to judges before they sentence the batterers (i.e., Victim Impact Statements).

This internship is designed to provide interns with significant exposure to victim's services and the criminal prosecution of domestic violence, as well as an opportunity to focus on a wide variety of issues related to domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Unit is newly formed (March, 1997) and in the process of developing and/or participating in task forces (e.g., Commissions on elder abuse, workplace violence) and groups related to citywide policies on domestic violence (e.g., domestic violence death review committee).

Past interns have assisted in developing handbooks for victims, conducted research on issues related to domestic violence (e.g., immigration laws and domestic violence, children exposed to domestic violence). Interns also take advantage of numerous training sessions offered over the course of the semester (e.g., D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence volunteer training, Police training on domestic violence). Interns will have an opportunity to directly observe various court matters, to view videotapes and to read articles that foster: better interviewing skills; an understanding on the dynamics of abuse; and the problems that battered victims face in the criminal justice system.

For those fulltime interns (i.e., 40 hours per week) who also have an interest in getting legal experience, there will be opportunities to work closely with prosecutors handling complex domestic violence cases. Interns must be highly motivated, self-directed persons with a strong interest in victims' issues or advocacy work. Computer knowledge and writing skills are highly desirable.

FELONY SECTION

The General Felony Section of the United States Attorney's Office is responsible for the post-indictment prosecution of all serious criminal cases in the District of Columbia Superior Court. The Section's attorneys handle cases ranging from narcotics offenses to serious assaults.

Interns are generally assigned to a team of three or more attorneys. The senior person on the team serves as the intern's mentor. The mentor acts as a conduit for work that is given to the intern, answers questions, and generally provides guidance to the intern. The intern's primary duty is to assist the attorney and/or paralegal to prepare for trial. This could involve such fundamental work as organizing the file, copying witness statements, providing discovery material to defense counsel, tracking down a defendant's criminal record, and supervising the preparation of trial exhibits. More advanced duties will be given to interns who show that they are capable. Those additional assignments can include locating and interviewing witnesses and doing legal research and writing. Interns will have the opportunity to become familiar with the criminal justice process, from arrest of an accused to prosecution and sentencing. Interns are often given the opportunity to "second chair" a trial, thus enabling them to actually participate in the litigation process from beginning to end.

MISDEMEANOR SECTION

The Misdemeanor Trial Section prosecutes approximately 12,000 misdemeanor offenses each year. With 28 Assistant United States Attorneys, the Section prepares and tries all cases involving misdemeanor offenses and administers diversion programs.

An intern selected to work in this Section is assigned to a team of four attorneys. Work will entail ensuring that the calendar for the team is ready and that all court jackets and other materials needed are in order. Additionally, interns assist the attorneys in preparing their cases for trial by arranging witness conferences, sending out subpoenas, researching criminal records on defendants and in a wide variety of evidence gathering duties. Interns will be given the opportunity to observe hearings and trials that they are working on, or those cases in which they have an interest.

The experience gained from being in the courtroom when hearings and trials are taking place, as well as from working with prosecuting attorneys, should prove invaluable in helping interns decide whether to pursue a legal career.